

FREE MAIL

# TIGER

Tuesday, March 15, 2005

Volume 1.....Issue 15

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To:

256th Brigade Combat Team  
Public Affairs Office

Please forward to your loved  
ones...Seal with tape or staples



# To the Families and Troops

**BG John Basilica, Jr.**  
**256 BCT Commander**



The Tiger Brigade continues to play a pivotal role in the history of Iraq. The latest example is the seating of the Transitional National Assembly (TNA) as the freely elected members of the assembly will gather and begin the work of establishing a transitional government and writing a

constitution. Again the 256 BCT has central responsibilities to assist the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to provide security to the TNA while they are in session. In addition to providing security, we will keep the pressure on the insurgents through continuous offensive operations.

Another focus area during this period will be our work in restoring and enhancing essential services for the Iraqi people. Adequate and reliable electricity, potable water, sewage and trash collection are critical to the

We are now at that halfway point of deployment, and more than ever, you must not become lazy. Do not forget safety and where we are. Keep your guard up and stay alert at all times. This is when a lot of Soldiers

**CSM James Mays**



have accidents and it is because they become too complacent with their surroundings. You all must stay motivated and do not lose focus.

There are a lot of changes and we must stay on top of them... I know there is a lot happening at this time, but stay focused on your mission and take care of

yourself and your buddies. Time will take care of itself.

The weather will be changing soon. Start concentrating on staying hydrated and eating right; the hot season is coming up on us quickly. Make sure

quality of life for all Iraqis. The 256 BCT has developed numerous projects across our area of responsibility to improve these services and assist the various ministries to provide basic services. This is critical to establish credibility and confidence in the new Iraqi government. In addition, the Brigade has provided assistance to schools and limited medical care in the largely rural areas we have responsibility for.

Local governments have begun to meet again on a regular basis and planning continues for numerous economic development projects. We continue to work with our partners in the Iraqi police units and conduct recruiting and screening of new applicants. Last but certainly not least, we have played a major role in restoring the agricultural industry in the greater Baghdad area.

All of these accomplishments are possible due the dedication, energy, expertise and courage of the soldiers of this Brigade. The collective efforts of the entire unit moves Iraq forward each and every day. I am enormously proud of your performance and your professionalism. **TIGER BRIGADE!**

The Tiger Tracks is a publication of the 256th Brigade Public Affairs Office. This Soldier and Family Support Group newsletter contains official information and complies with the provisions of AR 360-81 and AR 25-51. Questions or concerns can be directed to the editor at [taysha.deaton@id3.army.mil](mailto:taysha.deaton@id3.army.mil).

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that your PCC's and PCI's are taken care of, and keep plenty of water and MRE's in your vehicles. This is an area that should have no defects. The heat will be bad, and the temperatures will be high. In addition, you will be wearing your IBA and body armor, which will make it that much hotter.

There will be plenty of ice, so keep your water in an ice chest--I know that there aren't too many of you out there who like hot water. Make sure that you eat, this will help also. We don't need to sustain any unnecessary losses. Stay safe and stay focused!

## Chaplain's Corner

An old song in part says "I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.... On Christ, the Solid Rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand."

What a wonderful declaration of faith. Notice the author's faith is placed where it should be, not in something, but in Someone, the One who died for all of mankind.

As we celebrate the upcoming holiday of first fruits, otherwise known as Easter, may we each find our souls anchored to The Solid Rock.

I will never forget the Discovery show about the rock known as Gibraltar. As I look at this massive piece of real estate, I think this thing will be here forever. I am reminded however that when all of our support systems fail us that Jesus the Solid Rock remains forever.

I hope that your life is grounded on a solid foundation and not grounded on a foundation like we find here in Iraq at this time--lots of water and

"squishy mud."

The good news in this life, is there is a Solid Rock, a sure foundation in which your anchor will be steadfast and never fail you.

As we approach Holy Week may we each find true meaning in life. From my perspective this can only be found in the Solid Rock--The Christ Himself.

LTC Robert Baker, Jr.  
256<sup>th</sup> BCT Chaplain

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*Proverbs 23:26 says, "My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways."*

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## The Bible and Iraq

Israel is the nation most often mentioned in the Bible. But, do you know which nation is second? It is Iraq! However, that is not the name that is used in the Bible. The names used in the Bible are Babylon, Land of Shinar, and Mesopotamia. The word Mesopotamia means between the two rivers, more exactly between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The name Iraq, means country with deep roots. Indeed Iraq is a country with deep roots and is a very significant country in the Bible. Here's why:

- Eden was in Iraq — Genesis 2:10-14
- Adam & Eve were created in Iraq. Genesis 2:7-8
- Satan made his first recorded appearance in Iraq. Genesis 3:1-6
- Noah built the ark in Iraq.
- Nimrod established Babylon & the Tower of Babel was built in Iraq. Genesis 10:8-9; 11:1-4
- The confusion of the languages took place in Iraq. Genesis 11:5-11
- Abraham came from a city in Iraq. Genesis 11:31; Acts 7:2-4
- Isaac's bride came from Iraq. Genesis 24:3-4, 10
- Jacob Spent 20 years in Iraq and met Rachel there. Genesis 27:42-45; 31:38
- The first world Empire was in Iraq. Daniel 1:1-2; 2:36-38
- The greatest revival in history was in a city in Iraq. Jonah 3

- The events of the book of Esther took place in Iraq.
- The book of Nahum was a prophecy against a city in Iraq.
- Jonah preached in Nineveh - which is in Iraq.
- Assyria which is in Iraq conquered the ten tribes of Israel.
- Amos cried out in Iraq!
- Babylon which is in Iraq destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC
- Daniel was in the lion's den in Iraq!
- The 3 Hebrew children were in the furnace of fire in Iraq (Daniel)
- Belshazzar, the King of Babylon saw the "writing on the wall" in Iraq.
- Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, carried the Jews captive into Iraq.
- Ezekiel preached in Iraq.
- The wise men were from Iraq. (where are the "wise" -men today?)
- Peter preached in Iraq.
- The book of Revelation has prophecies against Babylon, which was the old name for the nation of Iraq. Revelation 17; 18

**No other nation, except Israel, has more history and prophecy associated with it than Iraq.**

Source: [www.bible.ca](http://www.bible.ca)  
Author: David L. Brown, Ph.D

# Golden Child

*Soldier Reaches Out*

**By Spc. Erin Robicheaux**  
**256<sup>th</sup> BCT Public Affairs**

Throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom, U.S. Soldiers have seen what war can do to a country and its people. Staff Sgt. Jessica Kelly, from Lafayette, La., is reaching out to one local resident to help make a difference.

"He's never going to walk again, but I just want him to be as comfortable as possible for what time he does have left."

For the past two months Kelly, Brigade Surgeon Assistant, has been working to get help for a 17-year-old boy who was injured at the start of the war. During the United States' initial entrance into Baghdad, planes dropped shells during an air raid and the boy, whose name is Malik, was within range when one exploded. Shrapnel pierced his back and went into his spinal column, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down. When Kelly first examined him, he was also suffering from secondary complications to the paralysis.

"On our initial visit we (the medics) found him laying on a clay floor," she said. "He had old bandages that were being washed and reused and he had horrible sores on his legs and hips."

The medics gave Malik intravenous antibiotics, cleaned his sores and changed his bandages. The sores were a result of lying on the hard floor and not being turned frequently enough. Kelly says they were the worst bed sores she has ever seen. Malik had a lot of tissue loss and bone was exposed on each hip. As Kelly and the medics left, she vowed to get help for him and his family and she promised them that she would be back.

She wrote her report and submitted it to her commanding general, who approved Malik as a "Golden Child" status." This meant that his case would receive special attention.

As the report was making its way up through the channels, Kelly did not put the family on the back burner while waiting for the decision. She made several visits to Malik's family, dropping off bandages, sterile water and antibiotics for his wounds.

Recently, Kelly got the news that the approval had



Staff Sgt. Jessica Kelly from Lafayette, La., puts new dressings on Malik's wounds. Kelly, a civilian nurse and Brigade Surgeon Assistant campaigned to get health care for the 17 year-old Iraqi boy. Malik was paralyzed from the chest down as a result of a shell exploding near him during an air raid.

been granted to give Malik and his family \$2,500. She says that hopefully this will help them. Their home was destroyed during the air raids, so right now they are living in an abandoned school with three or four other families.

"Hopefully this money will get them out of the school and set up a little bit," said Kelly.

The children's father is elderly and unable to work, and the next son in line is 10 years old. It will be a while before he is able to bring an income into the house. The money from the 256<sup>th</sup> may go a long way to keep the family somewhat comfortable until the younger son is able to support them.

A few days ago, Soldiers brought Malik a bed and restraints for his wheelchair to help him sit upright. Kelly also performed wound care and

applied new dressings to his injuries.

She says that what she is most excited about, though, is that two local physicians are going to actually go to Malik's home, pick him up and take him to the paralysis center in Baghdad. There are many scenarios that could help give him a prolonged and better quality of life. One option is to take his leg, which is something that the doctors would obviously like to avoid. Ideally, they would like to do skin grafts and rehabilitation, but it is unsure how successful that will be. They are also unsure of how much time he has left.

"It's hard to say what his life expectancy is," said Kelly, "he could die within the year or live for many more years."

She says that it all depends on the kind of care that he receives.

Thanks to Kelly, Malik and his family are getting a second chance. She says that the gratitude from his mother and sister are more and more evident with each visit and that their reactions let her know that she is making a difference.

"When his mom kisses me and praises Allah that I'm here, I can't think of a more noble cause to be away from my own family, than to be doing this."



# Black History Celebration

## Significant Moments

**Spc. Erin Robicheaux**  
**256<sup>th</sup> BCT Public Affairs**

The Tiger Den Dining Facility was the stage for "The Niagara Movement," a presentation orchestrated by 256<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team Soldiers, not only to celebrate Black History Month, but also the 100 year anniversary of the first significant black organized protest movement of the twentieth century.

Few would argue that the movement is indirectly responsible for the successes of the African Americans who were celebrated by the 256<sup>th</sup> Soldiers on Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>. Capt. Samantha Wade, Equal Opportunity officer for the Tiger Brigade, oversaw the coordination for the program.

"We kicked things off with a performance from the Tigerland Choir and then began the 'Journey Toward Equality,'" said Wade.

This "journey" took the specta-

tors and celebrants over the course of the past 100 years and shined a spot light on some of the most significant contributions of African American citizens.

"We covered many areas of interest, such as sports, entertainment, politics and even military history," said Wade.

Though it did not have a lasting life, the Niagara Movement made an impact that is still cherished today. Comprised of 29 pillars of their communities, including Frederick L. McGhee and C.E. Bentley, the group met on July 11, 1905 on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls. The location is where the name is derived from, and also because of the "mighty current" of protest they sought to cause. The NAACP is a direct descendent of the Niagara Movement and derives many of its goals from the older organization.

Appropriately for these Soldiers living in a combat zone, the military successes and highlights of all major wars were brought to light, including the first black Army regiment in the Civil War. Also honored was Vernon Baker, the first African American to win a Congressional Medal of Honor. Willie Mays, Louis Armstrong, and George Washington Carver are just a few of the prominent historical figures who were additionally given tribute.

Cast among these great pioneers of our time, is the Tuskegee Airmen, an experimental group who



Soldiers of the 256<sup>th</sup> BCT who make up the Tigerland Choir, lifted their voices Sunday evening in honor of African Americans throughout history. The Soldiers put on a program to celebrate Black History Month and the 100 year anniversary of the Niagara Movement.

were chosen in WWII when the political pressure was on to expand the role of African Americans in the military. The Wright Brothers took their historical flight only a few short years earlier, and the Army Air Corps put the mechanics into motion in the black community. They tasked the

Tuskegee Institute, a small black college in Alabama, to train African American pilots and support staff, i.e., the Tuskegee Airmen. Over 15,000 men and women participated in this experiment in 1942-46 and this time in history is captured at the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site.

Specialists Yolanda Shelby and Gwendolyn Walker of B Co. 199<sup>th</sup> Forward Support Battalion, attached to Headquarters and Headquarters Co. 199<sup>th</sup>, performed an "Inspirational Dance," that Wade says is special to the lineage of African American females.

"It celebrates the spirit and strength of the black woman," she said, "it came about when they were working in the fields, and it reflected on the upbringing of their children and their own spiritual growth".

The evening was concluded with a slide show of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life, and a tribute to Gen. Colin Powell and Dr. Condoleezza Rice.



Capt. Samantha Wade, Equal Opportunity Officer, for the 256<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team, recites "Mother to Son," a poem by Langston Hughes. Wade and Soldiers of the 256<sup>th</sup> conducted a program to celebrate Black History Month, spotlighting Hughes and other prominent African Americans of the times.

# Origin of the Dog Tags

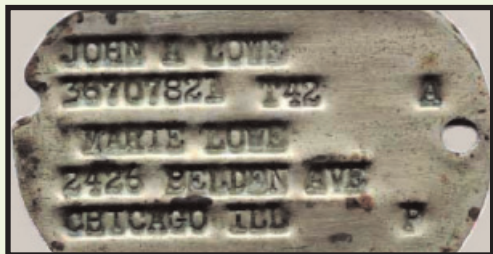
By Sgt. Thomas Benoit  
256<sup>th</sup> BCT Public Affairs

M1940 Dog Tags

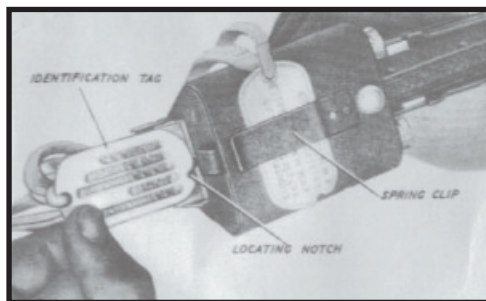
The familiar rattle of metal on metal, a constant reminder of the dog tags dangling from around a camouflaged neck, is perhaps the sound that most easily elicits memories of service to someone's country. To a Soldier, dog tags often have a mysterious or romantic lure. They tell of days gone by, time spent in foreign lands and the people who cross their paths as they serve our country. The tags signify the longing of loved ones separated by war, and serve as treasures for those left behind. Many children have proudly worn their parent's dog tags as proof positive that their mother or father was a fallen hero.

With the advent of modern warfare and an increase in casualties, came the need for more accurate individual identification. During the Civil War, Soldiers wrote their personal information on paper and attached it to their field jackets. Another method of identifying themselves was to inscribe information on their belt buckles. But, for all their ingenuity, many Soldiers' ideas were simply unable to withstand the turbulent conditions of the battlefield. Forty-two percent of the Civil War dead remain unidentified.

By 1913, the Army made identification tags mandatory, and by 1917, all combat Soldiers wore aluminum discs on chains around their necks. By World War II, the circular disc was replaced by the oblong shape familiar to Soldiers today, generally referred to as "dog tags." While no one seems to know the etymology of the term, it's well agreed upon that the nickname "dog tags" has its origins ensconced in WWII.



Part of the love affair with dog tags stems from the many myths associated with them. It's been more than 30 years since the cleft (notch) was a part of the dog tags. As the story goes, when a Soldier fell, his military brothers would insert the notches of the dog tag between his incisor teeth, and while the tag was held in place, another Soldier would kick his jaw. The tag became jammed between his teeth holding his mouth open. The second part of this myth was that the open mouth aided with the release of gases that a corpse generates. In actuality, the only purpose of "the notch" was to hold the blank tag in place on the embossing machine.



Perhaps a less glorified myth regards the chain that holds the tags. It is said to be comprised of 365 beads, and if a Soldier is taken prisoner, he can detach the beads as a means of keeping track of the number of days in captivity. There are perhaps many reasons for the popularity of grisly rumors regarding the purpose of the notch, or the chain for that matter, but as with most cases what reality fails to supply, rumor agreeably contributes.

The next of kin and address appeared on the earlier versions of the dog tags. This was abandoned, however, when it was claimed this information could be used psychologically against the Soldier.



With improved technological abilities, the Department of the Army developed and is currently testing a new dog tag. It holds 80 percent of a Soldier's personal, medical, and dental information on a microchip. Known as the Individually Carried Record, it will not replace the present tag, but augment it as part of the "paperless battlefield" concept.

For many Soldiers, dog tags are more than just cold, stainless steel rattling against their chests. They are an extension of their personality and a tribute to the warrior spirit. Often times, the tags are a tribute to a fallen Soldier, as well.



Nothing is quite as touching as witnessing a battle seasoned warrior of the 256th Brigade Combat Team fall crying to a knee, and clutch his friend's tags, as he says good-bye for the last time. This is a moment in which the love and mysticism entwined in the history of a United States Soldier's dog tags is powerfully felt.

Remember--the simple information contained on that small piece of metal can speak for you when you can't speak for yourself; it could mean the difference between a positive identification and an uncertain future for those who survive you should your identity be "...known only to God."



# Women's History Month

From the days of the American Revolution to the conflict in the Persian Gulf and today, throughout the World, American women have and are honorably serving in defense of our Nation. In times of war and peace, women have willingly responded to their country's call. Their contributions are characterized by individual and collective acts of self-sacrifice, patriotism, dedication and personal heroism.

Although not officially recognized as members of the Armed Forces until 1901, the involvement of women in military-related activities and matters in this country dates back at least to the Revolutionary War. It was then that Mary Hayes McCauly earned her nickname, Molly Pitcher, by carrying water in a grog to her husband and other American artillery men. Her fame however, is credited to when her husband collapsed in battle and she immediately took his place firing a cannon until the Battle was over. Mad Ann Bailey, an expert shot and skilled horsewoman, served as a scout, spy and messenger and Sarah Fulton delivered dispatches through enemy lines.

Deborah Sampson, disguised as a man, enlisted in the Revolutionary Army and fought in several engagements for three years. Injured twice, she treated her own wounds to avoid detection, but after being rendered unconscious and near death by a musket ball, the treating doctor discovered her true identity and she was quietly discharged from the Army.

Clara Barton contributed significantly to the establishment of a level of care for wounded soldiers that paralleled the contributions of Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War. She provided this care at some of the most famous battles of the Civil War, including Second Bull Run, Antietam and Fredericksburg. She was as committed to healing their spirits as she was to healing their bodies. After the War, Clara Barton established the first National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, and went on to found the American Red Cross.

Sarah Edmonds, in disguise, served as a male nurse, but later became a spy in the Union's secret service. A master of disguise, she was able to pass as a man or woman, as black or white, and crossed Confederate lines on numerous occasions.

Other women heroes of the Civil War included Dr. Mary Walker, who gave up her medical practice to go with the Union Army as a nurse because women could not be Doctors. She later volunteered to be a spy was captured by the Confederacy and held prisoner for four months. Dr. Walker was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for her actions, although it was



## *Roles in the Military*

later rescinded. She refused to return the medal and wore it proudly until her death.

In 1976, the U.S. Congress restored this honor and Dr. Mary Walker became the only woman in our Nation's history to be awarded the highest military award for Valor in War.

No story of women's military service during World War II would be complete without acknowledging the 900 women who voluntarily joined the Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASPS). Organized in 1942, at the request of General Hap Arnold, these women logged more than 60 million air miles. They served as flight instructors for men; ferried airplanes from the US to Europe, including high-speed fighters, bombers and P-47 thunderbolts

and also had the dubious privilege of towing targets for male fighter pilots so that they could practice on a moving object while using live ammunition.

In an unbelievable example of discrimination based on gender, these women received no support from the military, except for their pay, and were not even eligible for medical care or insurance in the case of an on the job injury. Thirty-eight WASPS were killed in airplane crashes and many more injured, but these women received no benefits and, upon their death, could not have a US flag draped over their casket. In 1977, the US Congress granted the surviving WASPS veteran status.

On Veterans Day in 1993, a bronze statue of three women and a wounded soldier was dedicated on the Mall in Washington, DC. This statue, in close proximity to the Vietnam Wall, was placed there in honor of the 265,000 women who served during the Vietnam era. It was a historic moment in time; for it was the first time our country has bestowed National recognition upon women who answered their country's call.

Then in October 1997, The Women in Service to America's Memorial was officially dedicated at the entrance to Arlington National Cemetery. This grand and gracious memorial was 11 years in the making and recognizes the honorable military service of women throughout history.

From the Revolutionary War to the present, America's women veterans have been invisible heroines. As a Nation, we must pay tribute to the American women; our grandmothers, mothers, and sisters, aunts and friends, who have served their country through military service; for indeed theirs is a proud and honorable heritage.

Source: [www.defenselink.mil/specials/womenhist2002](http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/womenhist2002)

Author: Joan A. Furey

# The Element of Surprise

**By: Spc. Erin Robicheaux**  
**256<sup>th</sup> BCT Public Affairs**

*You Just Never Know...*

Braving the cold and rain, medics of the 256<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team stop at nothing to provide medical care to the people of their Baghdad area. There are several ways that the brigade tries to bring health awareness to the locales, such as holding treatment clinics or bringing wheelchairs or other supplies to ailing individuals. The 256<sup>th</sup> has also taken a very unique approach to making this happen.

"We always try to surprise them when we go," said Lt. Col. Joseph Dore, 256<sup>th</sup> BCT Brigade Surgeon.

Dore says that showing up without warning is safer for the potential patients, because there is a chance that anti-American forces would try to sabotage the clinic, thus injuring the very people that the medical personnel are trying to heal.

He finds that getting there and then making an announcement over a loud-speaker makes for a more effective event. There is less chance of insurgents attacking if they have no knowledge ahead of time.

Spc. Melodi Holliday from Hammond, La., is a medic with C Co. 199<sup>th</sup> Forward Support Battalion, and this was her first time working with local nationals.

"It was what I expected as far as the flow of events of the clinic," she said.

Holliday says that the children of Baghdad continued to surprise her throughout the day.

"They're not like American children," she said, "they almost have an older mentality, and seem like adults in

little bodies."

One child, in particular, stood out in her mind.

"The patient who struck me the most was a little boy who had a burn that I treated."

The communication was broken, so she didn't know exactly what

"I'm going to take a lot of patience back home with me," she said, "Even though we had interpreters, not being able to speak the same language as the patient was a barrier. It made me appreciate the simplicity of my civilian job, in regards to communication."

The locales of the Bany Zaid community were not the only ones surprised on this day, though their surprise was much more pleasant.

On the way back to Camp Liberty, the Soldiers of the 256<sup>th</sup> were anticipating hot showers after being out in the rain all day, when the Plans Officer for 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn., 156<sup>th</sup> Inf. Regiment noticed something suspicious.

"There was a car in front of us that was going very slowly, and what made me pull it over was that it didn't have a license plate."

Maj. David Gooch, from Abbeville, La., said that the locales usually cooperate with convoys when instructed to get off of the road, and when this one did not, he pulled them over. Inside the car were four middle aged men. When

instructed to, three of the men exited the car quickly, but one stalled.

"I actually thought that searching them would be a pretty quick process, but when I noticed the front passenger fiddling around by his feet, I started to get suspicious."

After searching the vehicle, Gooch and his Soldiers found a shovel with fresh mud on it, a video camera, and some wire and wire cutters.

This may seem like enough evidence to bring the suspects in for questioning, but according to Gooch, it wasn't enough—at first.



Soldiers of the 256<sup>th</sup> BCT captured four insurgents on the way back to Camp Liberty following a medical mission. Shown is the evidence collected, including a shovel with fresh mud, a detonator, and anti-coalition documents.

happened to him, but it gave her a good feeling to be able to take care of his injury, in spite of all the barriers.

Dore is grateful to be able to help the people in the community, especially knowing that they don't get medical care very often, if ever. He says that to him, a successful medical operation is one where he can see as many patients as possible.

"As long as we can win over some hearts and minds when we do this, it's a success," he said.

For Holliday, who is a civilian X-ray Technician, her experiences in Baghdad have shed a whole new light on her occupation in the United States.

*Continued on page 12...*



# 256th BCT Families

*One Big Happy Family*



Sgt. Mark W. Oxmann, with B Batt. and his twin brother, Spc. Michael P. Oxmann, with Service Batt. 1/141st Field Artillery are from Kenner, La. and are serving in OIF III with the 256th BCT.

Sgt. Michael Abenoja and his brother, Sgt. Philip Abenoja from Staten Island, N.Y. Both Soldiers with HHC 1/69th Inf. Bn. of the 256th BCT.



Spc. David Devall of B Co. 3/156th Inf. Bn. and his cousin, Spc. Randall Blair of HHC 256th BCT, from Jennings, La., stationed together at Camp Liberty, Iraq.

Natives of Centerville, La., Spc. Aaron Comeaux of C Co 1/156th Armor Bn., and his father, Master Sgt. Jared Comeaux of HHC 2/156th Inf. Bn. are Soldiers of the 256th BCT.



Staff Sgt. Clint Bond of B Co. 1088th Eng. Bn. and his wife, Sgt. Rebecca Bond of A. Co. 1088th Eng. Bn., from Baton Rouge, La., want to tell their son, that they love and miss him very much!

# Contributions

## A Fallen Soldier's Wife Remembers...

Hello,

My name is Tiffany Comeaux. I am the wife of SFC Kurt Comeaux. He was one of the 7 who died in action on January 6 of this year. I am writing with hopes of expressing how much the job the soldiers are doing overseas is appreciated.

The past couple of months have been rough. We miss Kurt so much. Sometimes it doesn't seem real. We have 3 sons ages 9 and twins that are 7 years old. I would just like to express to all of the soldiers that my sons and I truly appreciate the sacrifice they are making. Not a day goes by that I do not think of the men and woman who are still miles and miles away from their families. We know how hard it is to be away from a loved one.

We are so proud of Kurt and forever will be.

We are hearing so many wonderful things about what he did in Iraq. I hear from a lot of his fellow soldiers when they come home on leave. It means so much to me to see and talk to these guys. I just want all of his fellow Blacksheep to know that the boys and I are doing okay. I will not lie and say that we are fine. We do have our hard days. Not a day goes by that I don't think about Kurt. I know that he was behind what his mission was. He loved being in the military. The many conversations we had while he was overseas revolved around what his boys were up to. He never really complained about his job.

There was a photo I received from a soldier of Kurt handing out items to children. He has a huge smile on his face. Kurt loved being with children. He adored his own. He volunteered often in our son's classrooms and he also visited my class frequently. This picture touched me the most. Many times, we here in the states don't get to see or hear of these king gestures. These are the things I want my sons to know that their dad did.

My most heartfelt thanks go out to all of the members of the National Guard that have been at my son's and my side. From Generals Hunt Downer and Landreneau to his fellow blacksheep I want them to remember to keep focused on their mission as Kurt would have it. They need to listen hard to the "Comeauxnease" being spoke to them.

There was also another group of soldiers that I would like to thank. The soldiers of the 1/69th from New York that our guys are attached to. They to lost a brother, Kenneth VonRon. Kurt spoke of him and said he felt as though he was a fellow Blacksheep. I have heard nothing but great things on how they assisted in recovering the remains of my husband and the other soldiers. I have received many cards and letters from family members of these soldiers and their fellow officers.

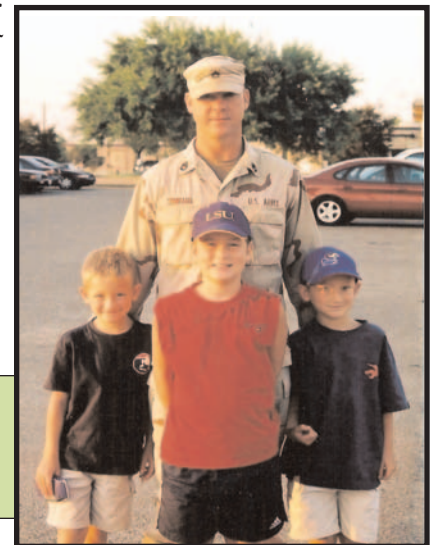
Words cannot express the deep thanks I have for the thousands of letters I have received from all over.

Please keep safe and god bless.

Your adopted family,

Tiffany, Bryce, Brandon and Brody Comeaux

*Sgt. 1st Class Kurt  
Comeaux,  
with his sons.*



Attention: Soldiers and Family Members

If you would like to express yourselves or have something you would like to share (ie. poems, stories, issues you would like to address, quotes, pictures from home, etc). Please send us your submissions for the next edition, Feel free to email us at [256\\_BCT\\_PublicAffairsOfficer@id3.army.mil](mailto:256_BCT_PublicAffairsOfficer@id3.army.mil) or any of the PAO staff members. We want your VOICE!



## 256th BCT Photo Album



Sgt. Alfred Schneider from New Orleans, La. of A Co. 3/156th. He is providing security for first MedCap just outside Baghdad, Iraq.

Staff Sgt. Steve E. Stern, from Dunreith, Ind., is a team leader attached to the 256th BCT Military Intelligence Company. Stern is searching the vehicle for unlawful possession of firearms and ammunition.



Spc. Joshua D. Hunt from West Lafayette, Ind. and Spc. Jarrett K. Mouton from Lafayette, La., both with the 256th BCT Military Intelligence Company, jumped right back into the saddle just days after their humvee was hit by a vehicle concealed improvised explosive device.

Soldiers of the 256th BCT who are members of the Kappa Alpha Fraternity, gathered together for a picture to send to their national headquarters.



# Element of Surprise *(continued)*

"I almost let them go in the beginning, because I knew that even with all that we'd found, it wouldn't hold up in an Iraqi court."

But he and his Soldiers were persistent, and in no time, they found the hard evidence that they were looking for.

Gooch searched the glove compartment and found some documents with Arabic writing, and he asked his interpreter to translate. His reaction was all that they needed to hear.

"Arrest them, arrest them!" he shrieked, "they're terrorists!"

When the Soldiers began to search the suspect, his suspicious behavior set off alarm bells. Upon searching him, they found evidence of insurgent activity.

"We've seen a lot of detonation devices," said Gooch, "our task force has encountered over a 100 IED's, so we know what they look like. Clearly, this was one of them."

The Iraqis were also listening to a tape of terrorist propaganda, which further told the Soldiers that the suspects were up to no good.

Maj. Rico Alvendia, Deputy Staff Judge Advocate for the 256<sup>th</sup> BCT, happened to be in the mix. He



Spc. Melodi Holliday from Hammond, La., a medic with C Co. 199th Forward Support Battalion, applies a splint to a little boy's jammed finger. Holliday is a civilian X-ray Technician. .

hand in hand, for example, if the suspect says that the material does not belong to him, the hard evidence will help to prove that it does.

Alvendia, a New Orleans, La. native, can't work on the case because he was involved in the capture, but he will still play a huge role in the legal process, as a witness.

"I think that we were fortunate to run into the insurgents on the way back from the medical mission," he said, "they will be prosecuted and I'm looking forward to being a witness."

Gooch feels confident that the case is a solid one.

"It's a slam dunk, they had Anti-Iraqi evidence, they had propaganda." This should be enough to detain them and send them through the court system to be tried for their charges.

And as Gooch said, you just never know what could happen. He reflects on how the day began as

a medical mission and ended with the capture of four insurgents.

When asked what he was thinking as they approached the suspects and pulled them over, one Soldier said, "all I thought was, 'Surprise!'"

***"Arrest them, arrest them!  
They're terrorists!"***

***--2/156th Inf. Bn.  
Interpreter***

was involved in the capture and says that when turning suspects over to the Iraqi government, more than scientific evidence needs to be presented. A lot of weight is placed on eye witness testimony, in addition to the usual fingerprints and crime scene particulars. And according to Alvendia, the science and circumstantial evidence will work



# Soldier's Voice

How has your deployment been thus far?

Sgt. Guy Morse  
South Milwaukee, Wis.  
B Co. 1/126<sup>th</sup>

"So far it has gone a lot smoother than expected. I have set a few goals that are on their way to being accomplished."



If you could run operations for one day, what would you change and sustain?

Spc. Samson Okafor  
Plaquemine, La.  
C Co. 1088<sup>th</sup> Eng. Bn.

"I would have made the training at Ft. Hood more realistic to what is actually happening here. As far as what I would leave the same, I'm the assistant to the company 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt., and I think that everything about my job runs smoothly. I can't think of anything that I would want to change."



Sgt. Josephine Izzo  
Pineville, La.  
B Co. 199<sup>th</sup>, attached to  
HHC 199<sup>th</sup> FSB

"I've learned a lot about myself. Back home I'm Mom, and here I'm finding out who I am. I've also learned that my son is very self-sufficient."



Pfc. Mario Mendizabal  
Houma, La.  
B Co. 2/156<sup>th</sup>

"It has been so-so. I personally do not enjoy being deployed. However, I am trying to be strong for my family back home."

Staff Sgt. James Lehmann  
B/134<sup>th</sup> Signal  
Hastings, Minn.

"If I could run operations for one day, I would get all of the S-shops in one room and teach them how to work together, their jobs should compliment each other. If I could sustain one thing, I would keep the fun activities going. I think that events like the Christmas celebration and things like that has really helped the mentality of my Soldiers."



Spc. Shaun Slawson  
Ft. Polk, La.  
A Co. 1/156<sup>th</sup>

"I've been taking each day one step at a time and thanking God that I am still alive."



# Announcements

*What's Happening in the 256th?*

## 256th Court Martial

1. Pfc. Stephen Broderon HHC 1/156th  
Article 128 Punishment: Reduction to E1; forfeiture of 2/3 month pay for 12 months; 4 months confinement
2. Spc. Darrell R. Grubbs C Co. 1/156th  
Article 86; Article 91 (3 Charges); Article 134 (2 Charges) Punishment: Reduction to E1; confinement for 3 months; Bad Conduct Discharge
3. Pvt. Russell Anderson HHC 1/156th  
Article 91 Punishment: forfeiture of \$500 for 1 month; 30 days confinement suspended for 6 months
4. Spc. Jeremy L. Breaux A Co. 1/56th  
Article 92; Article 112a Punishment: Reduction to E2 (suspended 180 days) forfeiture of 1/2 month pay
5. Pvt. Varnavous Narcisse HHC 2/156th  
Article 91 Punishment: Reduction to E2; forfeiture of 2/3 month pay for 1 month; suspended for 6 months; 30 days confinement suspended for 6 months
6. Spc. Spencer Rollins HHC 2/156th  
Article 91 Punishment: Reduction to E3; forfeiture of 2/3 month pay for 1 month suspended for 6 months; 30 days confinement suspended for 6 months

7. Pfc. Scott P. Specht C Co. 1/101 CAV  
Article 90; Article 92 Punishment: Reduction to E2; forfeiture of \$500 pay for 1 month; confinement for 30 days suspended for 180 days
8. Pfc. Nicholas Geyer HHC 2/156th  
Article 86; Article 91 Punishment: Reduction to E1; forfeiture of 2/3 month pay for 1 month; 30 days confinement suspended for 6 months; suspension of confinement vacated 12 FEB 05
9. Spc. Jeffery p. Ardoin A Co. 1088th  
Article 92; Article 134 Punishment: forfeiture of 1/2 month pay for 1 month
10. Spc. Daniel Boutin, Jr. A Co. 1088th  
Article 197; Article 112a (2 Charges) Punishment: Reduction to E2; forfeiture of 1/2 month pay; confinement for 30 days
11. Spc. Cory L. Cooper B Co. 199th  
Article 112a Punishment: Reduction to E3; forfeiture of \$250 pay for 1 month; confinement for 30 days
12. Spc. James E. Glasgow B Co. 199th  
Article 92; Article 112a (2 Charges) Punishment: Reduction to E2; forfeiture of \$500 for 1 month; confinement for 30 days

## CHALLENGE

### HALO 2 Tournament

When: March 26th and 27th 20:00

Where: 256th BCT  
MWR

4-6 Man Teams (Bring your own controller)

Prize: Bragging Rights

POC: cfoster516@gmail.com

C H E C K I T O U T ! ! !

if you would like to view our previous newsletters, press releases, and much more!

Check out

[www.256th.com](http://www.256th.com)

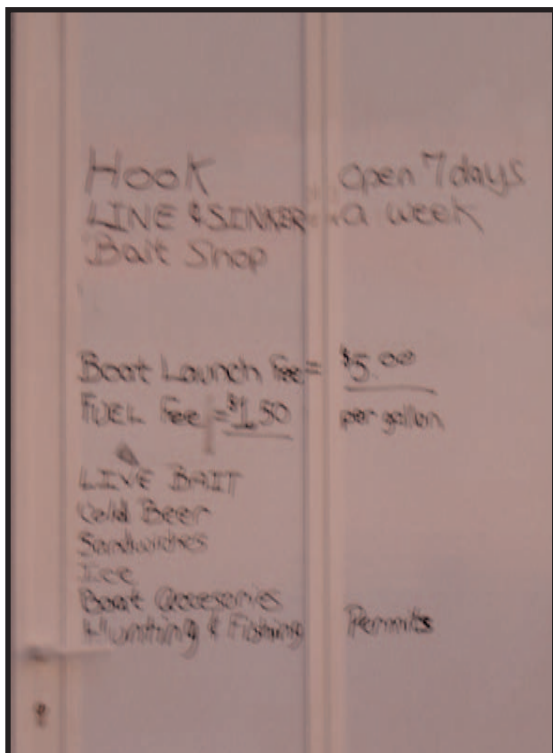
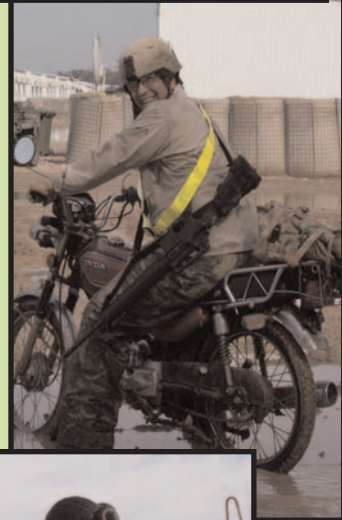


# Just For Laughs

*Splish Splash!*



Noah and his ark sustained the wind and rain for 40 days and nights, but thankfully, Soldiers of the 256th BCT only had to endure a week. Though the rain eventually subsided, it left the troops literally rowing to work and play in their stereotypical Louisiana pirogues!



# Fallen Soldier

*In Loving Memory*

Spc. Wai Phyto Lwin

Spc. Azhar Ali

